

Tower Grove Park Shelter Sixteen
(Picnic Shelter)
Tower Grove Park
4255 Arsenal Street
St. Louis
Missouri

HABS No. MO-1137-L

HABS
MO,
96 SALV,
46L-

PHOTOGRAPHS
REDUCED COPY OF MEASURED DRAWING
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. MO-1137-L

TOWER GROVE PARK SHELTER SIXTEEN

HABS
MO,
96-SAL
46L-Location:

Headquarters at 4255 Arsenal Street, St. Louis, Missouri. The shelter lies 800' north and 600' east of the south gate at Arsenal Street and the central cross drive (a continuation of Tower Grove Avenue). The structure fronts on the south edge of the main east-west drive, within the original boundaries of Tower Grove Park.

USGS Webster Groves Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 15.739000.4276420

Present Owner:

City of St. Louis.

Present Use:

Public picnic shelter.

Significance:

The structure is a well-preserved example of the picturesque and eclectic design favored by British and American landscape architects in the nineteenth century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Spring 1873 (Tower Grove Park Comptroller's Report 1868, p.204, builder payment 4/21/1873).
2. Architect: Henry Thiele (Tower Grove Park Receipts and Vouchers 1/73-7/73, payment to Thiele for drawing and superintendence of a summerhouse (Chinese Style) and a horse shade (5/22/73). For biographical information see the HABS report on Tower Grove Park (MO-1137).
3. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The structure was built by J.W.F. Ditte, under Thiele's supervision (Comp. 1868, p.204, 4/21/73).
4. Original plans, construction, etc: The shelter was constructed as a horse shade or carriage stand. It was thus described in 1883.

The concourse ground or carriage stand is situated a short distance south of the main drive, in the vicinity of the music stand and concourse drives. It is provided with hitching posts and well, with a shelter house in the center, and the whole is surrounded by a light wooden fence of ornamental design. It is intended to eliminate the inconvenience of the drives being encumbered with standing vehicles. (MacAdam, p.34).

5. Alterations and additions: The fence and hitching posts have been removed in the conversion of the structure to a purely pedestrian shelter -- date unknown. the well apparatus has been removed and covered over in compliance with the 1915 City Board of Health order (Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners, 1915, 1/19/16, p.10).

B. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: View showing horse hitches, fence, ca. 1875, copied from print in Tower Grove Park Misc. Photo File, Superintendent's office, 4274 Magnolia Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.
2. Bibliography:
 - a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Manuscripts, etc.: Henry Shaw's Comptroller Report Books 1868, 1875, 1882 and 1888; Tower Grove Park Receipts and Vouchers for 1867-1889; and the Board of Commissioners Reports from 1868-1898 are in the custody of Park Superintendent Miss Bernice E. Gurney and probably will be transferred from her office at 4274 Magnolia Avenue to the Shaw Manuscripts Collection in the John S. Lehmann Library at the Missouri Botanical Garden, 2345 Tower Grove Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri, by the end of the summer of 1974.

Deed Books: City Hall, Market Street, St. Louis, Missouri.

- b. Secondary sources:

Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners Tower Grove Park.
St. Louis: Nixon-Jones Printing, 1899-1919.

_____. St. Louis: Arcade Print Shop, 1920.

Prepared by: Carolyn Hamm
and
Peter Dessauer
Field Historians
National Park Service
July 1974
August 1975

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is one of the most ornate of the octagonal pavilions. This double-roofed shelter's lower tier consists of eight low-pitched sections and is surmounted by low octagonal drum with a steep umbrella roof.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Octagonal shape, eight 15'-0" wide bays, 25'-6" high.
2. Foundations: Concrete bases under the columns.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Eight outer cedar octagonal columns rest on concrete bases and have white wooden capitals and braces framed with carved tracery painted red. They support a broad fascia beam painted yellow. There is an inner set of similar columns supporting the octagonal drum of the upper roof.
4. Roof:
 - a. Shape and covering: The double-pitched octagonal roof is covered with natural texture Wisconsin fir shakes. The first roof is supported by rafters joined to the central octagonal drum, from which rises a short blind cupola with a concavely bowed second roof. The corners and valleys of the roofs are flashed with metal strips.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Under the eaves of the lower roof are modillions painted red. Under the eaves of the upper roof is an overhanging band of bandsawcut pendentive tracery painted tan. Just below it, holes are punched in the cupola sides for bird entry. Just above it is a beveled cornice painted red and tan. The upper roof is crowned by a vertical stack-like metal decorative member, which once was the base for an orb and a spire, now removed.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plan. The inner and outer octagonal spaces are defined by the outer and inner sets of columns.
2. Flooring: The floor consists of inlaid brick in herring-bone pattern enclosed by a concrete border.
3. Ceiling: The lower roof ceiling is tongue and groove wood painted light blue, with radial half rounds painted red, projecting to the corners and creating a "wagon wheel" design. The central octagonal drum is open. The upper roof walls are tongue and groove wood painted yellow, and its ceiling is arranged and painted in the same manner as the lower one.

- D. General setting: The pavilion is filled with picnic tables, well shaded, and easily accessible from pedestrian walks on the north, south and west sides. It lies 800' north and 600' east of the south gate and central cross drive, fronting on the south edge of the main east-west drive.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Tower Grove Park and Missouri Botanical Garden Project was jointly sponsored by the Historic American Buildings Survey of the National Park Service, the Board of Commissioners of Tower Grove Park, and the Board of Trustees of the Missouri Botanical Gardens.

Recorded under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, and Kenneth L. Anderson, HABS Principal Architect, the project was conducted during the summer of 1974 and 1975 at the Historic American Buildings Survey field office at the Missouri Botanical Garden, St. Louis.

1974 Team: Robert Harvey, Project Supervisor, (Landscape Architect); Steven Bauer, Project Foreman, architect, (University of Kansas); Carolyn Hamm, project historian, (Cornell University); Patrick Ackerman, student assistant architect, (Washington University); Suzanne Fauber, student assistant landscape architect, (University of Virginia); and Carol Macht, student assistant landscape architect, (University of Michigan).

1975 Team: Stuart Mertz, A.S.L.A., project supervisor, (landscape architect); Steven Bauer, Project Foreman, (Columbia University); Peter Dessauer, project historian, (Clemson University); Lennard A. Roberts, student assistant architect, (Cornell University); John R. Temmink, student assistant architect, (University of Virginia); and Theodore Torpy, landscape architect, (WASO).

The drawings were revised by HABS architect Paul Dolinsky, and the written data were edited by HABS Architectural Historian Denys Peter Myers, in the HABS Washington office in 1983. The photographs were taken by HABS/HAER Photographer Jet Lowe in 1983.